Convergence of technologies to enhance productivity

596. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:
SHRI VIAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that in an all India Seminar held in Nagpur during January, 2007, a general consensus emerged stressing upon the convergence of the information computer and electronic technologies with farming technology to empower the farmers to enhance their productivity; and

(b) if so, whether the Institutes of Agriculture Research would be advised to evolve simple modalities so that grassroot farmers could be apprised and motivated to adopt technologies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir. No such seminar was organized in Nagpur during January, 2007 by the Ministry of Agriculture.

(b) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has taken up a programme for providing electronic linkage to Krishi Vigyan Kendras to facilitate availability of agricultural technology to the farmers.

Mechanism for protection against losses from bird flu

597. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the outbreak of bird flu has again been noticed in the country;

(b) if so, whether any steps have been taken to contain its spread into various parts of the country and any compensation mechanism has been devised to protect the farmers from the imminent losses;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Yes, Sir. Government has notified the outbreak of Avian Influenza (H5N1) in Manipur on 25th July, 2007.

(b) to (d) Control and containment measures were initiated immediately to stamp out and prevent the spread of the disease of poultry. The details are given in the Statement.

Statement

Measures taken to prevent the spread of the disease

The following measures were taken in Manipur to prevent the spread of Avian Influenza:

1. Demarcation of infected and surveillance areas was carried out in accordance with the Action Plan. An area of 0-5 kms. was designated as the Infected Zone and a further area of 5-10 kms. was designated as the Surveillance Zone.

2. The poultry, both backyard and commercial, has been culled in a radius of 0-5 kms around the affected farm premises.

3. Other infected materials such as poultry eggs, feathers, feed, feed materials, protective cloth used by the staff engaged in operations etc. has also been destroyed. Approximately 25,242 kg of feed material and 28 thousand eggs have been destroyed.

4. Thereafter cleaning and disinfection of the infected premises/area has been undertaken, which is under progress.

5. Physical surveillance in the 5-10 km area is being continued to ascertain if there is any further unusual mortality. No unusual mortality has been reported in the surveillance zone as well as from anywhere else in the State.

6. The Government of India has maintained strategic reserve of poultry vaccines. The option of vaccination is thus available to the country. However, vaccination has not yet been introduced in the country.

7. The personnel involved in containment work were provided personal protective equipment and brought under cover of Tamiflu by the health authorities.

8. It is the policy of the Government of India to pay compensation to owner for culled poultry. The costs are being shared on a 50:50 basis with the State Government. Approximately 75 lakhs Indian Rupees have been paid as compensation.

Moreover, the following measures have also been taken up by the Government of India to prevent spread of the disease to other States:

1. Action Plan for Preparedness, Control and Containment of Avian Influenza for Animal Husbandry has been prepared and circulated by Government of India to facilitate action by the State Governments.

2. Import of poultry & poultry products has been banned completely from Avian Influenza positive countries.

3. All the State Governments have been alerted to be vigilant about the outbreak of the disease if any.

4. Border security formations and custom field formations have been alerted.

5. State of the north-east specially those bordering outbreak countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar and China have been alerted.

6. Nationwide surveillance is continuing. Approximately 1,43,000 samples have been tested at High Security Animal Disease Laboratory (HSADL), Bhopal since February 2006.

7. Testing for Avian Influenza have also been started at Regional Level *viz.*, Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratories, Kolkata, Bangalore, Pune and Jallandhar. So far, approximately 37,000 samples have been tested in the regional laboratories.

8. The training of veterinary personnel in preparedness, control and containment started in October 2005 at regional level is continuing. The training was shifted to State level basis by the Government of India from September 2006. More than 30% of the veterinary workforce under employment of Government has been trained as Master-Trainers for further field trainings.

9. A National workshop on Preparedness, Control and Containment of Avian Influenza was organized at Pune during May, 2007 and recently a Regional Workshop of the North-Eastern States (Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and West Bengal) was organized at Kolkata by Government of India from 26-28th July 2007.

National Bamboo Mission Programme

598. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how far it is a fact that Government are about to launch National Bamboo Mission Programme after China's success;

(b) if so, whether this mission will be able to generate employment opportunities especially in Assam where the availability of Bamboo is plenty;

(c) whether Government have developed the necessary infrastructures to fulfil the mission; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Government of India has launched the National Bamboo Mission Programme in the country during 2006-07, including Assam. The Mission is envisaged to generate 64.1 million man days of work in the plantation and nursery sectors in the country. Besides this, there will be employment generation in both skilled and unskilled segments in the handicraft sector in the States, including Assam.

(c) and (d) At the central level, the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation has constituted National Apex Committee, National Steering Committee, Working sub-Groups, National Bamboo Cell and Bamboo Technical Support Group to implement and monitor the progress of National Bamboo Mission.

In so far as State of Assam is concerned, the State Level Bamboo Steering Committee has been constituted to implement the National Bamboo Mission in the State. The Forest Development Agency (FDAs) have also been identified for the development of plantation and nurseries in the Forest Area. However, the Bamboo Development Agency (BDAs) are in the process of formation to look after the implementation works in the Non-Forest Area in the State.

National action plan for farmers

599. SHRI M. V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have chalked out any national action plan for farmers of the country to save them from drought/floods/rising cost of inputs, etc.;